

| | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA Department of Health and Human Services Division of Health Benefits | REQUEST FOR INFORMATION NO. 30-2024-042-DHB | |
| | Issue Date: December 9, 2024 | |
| | Due Date: January 24, 2025 | |
| Refer <u>ALL</u> Inquiries regarding this RFI to: Michael Brown – Contract Specialist michael.c.brown@dhhs.nc.gov Medicaid.Procurement@dhhs.nc.gov | Commodity Number: 811620 | |
| | Description: Consolidated DHB Call Center | |
| | Using Agency: NC Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Health Benefits | |

This Consolidated DHB Call Center Solution Request for Information (“RFI”) is available electronically on the North Carolina electronic Vendor Portal (“NC eVP”) at <https://evp.nc.gov/>.

The purpose of this RFI is to survey the market for information requested herein and not to award a contract. Submission of a response does not create an offer, and no award will result by submitting a response.

The State recognizes that considerable effort may be required in preparing a response to this RFI. However, the Respondent shall bear all costs for preparing and submitting a response. Information obtained through this RFI process may be used to develop a future solicitation.

Responses to this RFI will be received until 2:00 p.m. EST, January 24, 2025.

EXECUTION

| | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| RESPONDENT NAME: | E-MAIL: | |
| STREET ADDRESS: | P.O. BOX: | ZIP: |
| CITY & STATE: | TELEPHONE NUMBER: | TOLL FREE TEL. NO: |
| TYPE OR PRINT NAME & TITLE OF PERSON SIGNING: | FAX NUMBER: | |
| AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE: | DATE: | |

Table of Contents

SECTION I. RESPONDENT QUESTIONS, RESPONSE INSTRUCTIONS, AND CONFIDENTIALITY3

 A. Respondent Questions Regarding this Request for Information (RFI)3

 B. Anticipated Schedule3

 C. Instructions for Developing Responses3

 D. Instructions for Submitting Responses4

 E. Notice Regarding Confidentiality.....4

SECTION II. RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS5

 A. Rights to Submitted Material.....5

 B. Obligations of the State.....6

SECTION III. CONSOLIDATED DHB CALL CENTER SOLUTION.....6

 A. Background and Program Information6

 B. Purpose of the RFI.....6

 C. Definitions and Acronyms7

 D. Core Consolidated DHB Call Center Solution Functions7

 E. Standard Requirements8

SECTION IV. REQUESTED INFORMATION FROM RESPONDENT8

 A. Content and Format8

 B. Information about Respondent.....9

 C. Solution Functionality and Performance9

 D. Financial / Total Cost of Ownership100

SECTION I. RESPONDENT QUESTIONS, RESPONSE INSTRUCTIONS, AND CONFIDENTIALITY

A. Respondent Questions Regarding this Request for Information (RFI)

1. Written questions concerning this RFI must be received by the date provided in the Anticipated Schedule. The questions must be submitted to the Contract Specialist listed on Page One of this RFI via the Ariba Sourcing Tool's message board. Please enter "Questions RFI 30-2024-042-DHB" as the subject for the message. The questions should be submitted in the format below, adding additional lines as needed.

| No. | RFI Section | RFI Page Number | Respondent's Question |
|------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | (Ex. Section IV.C.1.a) | (Ex. Page 8) | |
| 2 | | | |

2. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Health Benefits (Department), intends to prepare responses to written questions submitted by the specified deadline and post an addendum on the Ariba Sourcing Tool with the Department's responses by the date provided in the Anticipated Schedule.

B. Anticipated Schedule

The Department will make every effort to adhere to the following schedule:

| Action | Responsibility | Date | Time (EST) |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| RFI Issued | Department | 12/09/2024 | |
| Written Questions Deadline | Respondent(s) | 12/23/2024 | 2:00 pm |
| Department's Response to Written Questions / RFI Addendum Issued | Department | 01/15/2025 | |
| Responses Due | Respondent(s) | 01/24/2024 | 2:00 pm |

C. Instructions for Developing Responses

When developing Responses to this RFI, the Respondent should consider the following:

1. Read and carefully review all sections of this RFI.
2. Prepare responses in a straightforward and detailed manner. Responses are to be submitted to the Department according to the instructions found on the cover page of the RFI and in Section II.
3. Complete the Execution section on Page 1 of this RFI and number the pages in the responses.
4. Clearly identify the specific question, section, and subsection number(s) or other identifiers that correspond with each response. This allows the Department to clearly understand the specific questions or items addressed. Each section of the response should, to the extent possible, address the items in the order in which they appear in the RFI.
5. Provide detailed information in a format that may include a narrative, exhibits, charts, tables or other artifacts that support the response.

6. Responses to all questions and items within the RFI are encouraged, but there is no obligation to do so.
7. The Department reserves the right to contact any Respondent and request additional information. Include the contact information for the individual(s) best suited to engage with the Department.

D. Instructions for Submitting Responses

1. The Respondent must submit their response to this RFI via the Ariba Sourcing Tool by the specified time and date provided in the Anticipated Schedule.

For training on how to use the Ariba Sourcing Tool to view solicitations, submit questions, develop responses, upload documents, and submit offers to the State, Respondents should go to the following site: <https://eprocurement.nc.gov/training/vendor-training>.

Questions or issues related to using the Ariba Sourcing Tool itself can be directed to the North Carolina eProcurement Help Desk at 888-211-7440, Option 2. Help Desk representatives are available Monday through Friday from 7:30 AM EST to 5:00 PM EST.

2. When submitting a response, include all pages of the RFI, a completed and signed EXECUTION Section on page 1, and responses to the requested information contained in Section IV.
3. The following copies are required to be provided to the Department in response to this RFI:
 - a. One (1) electronic copy of the signed, completed response identified as **RFI 30-2024-042-DHB - Respondent's Name**.
 - b. One (1) electronic copy of a redacted response in accordance with Chapter 132 of the North Carolina General Statutes, the Public Records Act, identified as **RFI 30-2024-042-DHB - Respondent's Name - Redacted**. For the purposes of this RFI, redaction means to edit a document by obscuring or removing information that is considered confidential and/or proprietary by the Respondent and that meets the definition of Confidential Information set forth in G.S. 132-1.2. Any information removed by the Respondent should be replaced with the word, "Redacted." If Respondent's response does not contain Confidential Information, the Respondent must submit a signed statement to that effect identified as **RFI 30-2024-042-DHB - Respondent's Name - Statement of Confidential Information**.
4. The electronic copies of the response must not be password protected.
5. The electronic copies of the response must be in PDF format.

E. Notice Regarding Confidentiality

1. As provided for in the North Carolina Administrative Code (NCAC), including but not limited to 01 NCAC 05B .0103, 09 NCAC 06B .0103 and 09 NCAC 06B .0302, all information and documentation whether electronic, written or verbal relative to the development of a contractual document for a proposed procurement or contract shall be deemed confidential in nature. In accordance with these and other applicable rules and statutes, such material shall remain confidential until the award of a contract or until the need for the procurement no longer exists. **Any proprietary or confidential information, which conforms to exclusions from public records as provided by NCGS § 132, must be clearly marked as such with each page containing the trade secret or confidential information identified in boldface as "CONFIDENTIAL."** If only a portion of each page marked "CONFIDENTIAL" contains trade secret information, the trade secret information shall be designated with a contrasting color or by a box around such information. In addition to marking confidential information as required by NCAC 05B.0103, confidential pages or portions of the response shall be reflected in the redacted copy identified as **RFI 30-2024-042-DHB – Respondent's Name – Redacted**. By submitting a redacted copy, the Respondent warrants that it has formed a good faith opinion, having received such necessary or proper review by counsel and other knowledgeable advisors that the portions marked confidential and redacted

meet the requirements of NCGS §132. The Respondent must identify the legal grounds for asserting that the information is confidential, including the citation to state law.

2. Protection of Cost Information – Under State procurement rules and practices, Respondents submitting offers, proposals, bids or quotes in response to competitive or other procurement solicitations are typically prohibited from designating cost information as confidential. However, since the purpose of this RFI is to survey the market for information and not to award a contract, Respondents should mark and redact any proprietary or confidential cost information which meets the requirements of NCGS §132-1.2.
3. Except as otherwise provided above, pursuant to NCGS § 132-1, et seq., information or documents provided to the Department in response to this RFI are Public Record and subject to inspection, copy and release to the public unless exempt from disclosure by statute, including, but not limited to, NCGS § 132-1.2. Redacted copies provided by the Respondent to the Department may be released in response to public record requests without notification to the Respondent.
4. During the period spanning the issuance of the RFI to the time the Department completes any procurement activities related to this RFI, possession of responses, accompanying information, and subsequent Department led discussions are limited to personnel of the Department and any third parties involved in this procurement process.
5. Each Respondent submitting a response (including its representatives, subcontractors, and suppliers or other pilot partners or affiliates) is prohibited from having any communications with any person inside or outside the using agency, issuing agency, other government agency office, or body (including the Department's Contract Administrator named on page 1 above, department secretary, agency head, members of the General Assembly and Governor's office), or private entity, if the communication refers to the content of Respondent's response or another Respondent's response, and/or the transmittal of any other communication of information that could be reasonably considered to have the effect of directly or indirectly influencing the review of a response. Only those discussions, communications or transmittals of information authorized or initiated by the issuing agency for this RFI or general inquiries directed to the Department's Contract Administrator regarding requirements of the RFI are excepted from this provision.
6. The Department may serve as custodian of Respondent's confidential information and not as an arbiter of claims against Respondent's assertion of confidentiality. If an action is brought pursuant to NCGS §132-9 to compel the Department to disclose information marked confidential, the Respondent agrees that it will intervene in the action through its counsel and participate in defending the Department, including any public official(s) or public employee(s). The Respondent agrees that it shall hold the Department, State of North Carolina, and any official(s) and individual(s) harmless from all damages, costs, and attorneys' fees awarded against the Department in the action. The Department will provide reasonable notice to the Respondent in writing of any action seeking to compel the disclosure of Respondent's confidential information. The Department shall have the right, at its option and expense, to participate in the defense of the action through its counsel. The Department shall have no liability to Respondent with respect to the disclosure of Respondent's confidential information ordered by a court of competent authority pursuant to NCGS 132-9 or other applicable law.

SECTION II. RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

A. Rights to Submitted Material

All responses, inquiries or correspondence relating to or in reference to this RFI, and all documentation submitted by the various Respondents shall become the property of the Department when received.

Ideas, approaches, and options presented by Respondents may be used in whole or in part by the State in developing a future solicitation should the Department decide to proceed with a solicitation. Further, combinations of ideas from various Respondents may also become part of a solicitation, based on consideration of various RFI submissions and the needs of the Department, which may differ from any Respondent's experience in other places.

B. Obligations of the Department

The Department may choose to issue a solicitation for the procurement of a solution. However, this RFI is not a guarantee that a solicitation will be issued for any or all of the services or systems referenced herein, about which ideas and approaches are being sought. As provided in Section I, paragraph E - Notice Regarding Confidentiality of this RFI, information submitted by Respondents for this RFI will remain confidential until after the award of any solicitation or until the State decides not to issue a solicitation.

SECTION III. CONSOLIDATED DHB CALL CENTER SOLUTION

A. Background and Program Information

In July 2021, the NC Medicaid Managed Care program was enacted that allows beneficiaries to choose a health plan and receive care through the plan's network of doctors. Through Medicaid Managed Care, the Department seeks to advance integrated and high-value care, improve population health, engage and support providers, and establish a sustainable program with more predictable costs.

Currently there are twenty-one (21) different call centers with eighty-five (85) different call lines that beneficiaries, providers, and other stakeholders utilize to navigate the various call centers that are part of the Medicaid ecosystem. Each of these call centers are trained on the transfer and referral matrix which explains the function of each call center, who the call center caters to, and their phone numbers. If a caller starts at the wrong place, then that call center is responsible for referring or transferring the caller to the correct call center. Each call center handles different call reasons for different stakeholders and results in complexity for the caller as each line has a different phone number that stakeholders must call to get connected to. These specialized call centers with their large number of phone numbers cause stakeholder confusion and frequent misdialled calls which can result in frustration.

The Department requires a consolidated DHB call center solution that utilizes an AI Enabled Automated Voice Response Systems (AVRS) to increase efficiency in call center communications and decrease confusion, errors and the number of agents required to handle calls. A single phone number would lead to the AVRS to gather caller information and their call reason, and then reference its databases to either answer the question or to transfer the caller to the appropriate call center. This solution would look to leverage DHHS integration, analytics, and security services and be integrated with the North Carolina Families Accessing Services through Technology (NC Fast), Medicaid Integration Services (MIS), or other Medicaid Enterprise System (MES) Modules, such as Provider Data Management/Centralized Verification Organization (PDM/CVO) and Pharmacy Benefit Administration (PBA), to provide beneficiary and provider information.

B. Purpose of the RFI

The purpose of the RFI is to:

1. Solicit feedback from potential vendors with experience developing and deploying AI Enabled AVRS call center solutions.

2. Obtain a rough order magnitude estimate of the total cost of ownership to develop, implement, and maintain the solution defined in the RFI.
3. Obtain information which may be used to develop a Request for Proposal (RFP) to solicit vendors competitively to provide an AI Enabled AVRS Consolidated DHB Call Center to the Department.

C. Definitions and Acronyms

1. **AI:** Artificial Intelligence
2. **AVRS:** Enabled Automated Voice Response Systems
3. **CMS:** Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
4. **Department:** Collectively North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Health Benefits
5. **DHB:** Division of Health Benefits
6. **DID:** Direct Inward Dial
7. **Health Plan:** An entity that assumes the risk of paying for medical treatments, i.e. uninsured patient, self-insured employer, payer, or HMO
8. **HITRUST CSF:** Health Information Trust Alliance created to maintain the Common Security Framework
9. **MES:** Medicaid Enterprise System
10. **MIS:** Medicaid Integration Services
11. **NC eVP:** North Carolina electronic Vendor Portal located at <https://evp.nc.gov/>
12. **NCAC:** North Carolina Administrative Code at <http://reports.oah.state.nc.us/ncac.asp>
13. **NCAalytics:** Reporting and analytics component of NCTracks
14. **NCTracks:** Multi-payer Medicaid Management Information System/Claims reimbursement system
15. **NC Fast:** North Carolina Families Accessing Services through Technology
16. **NCGS:** North Carolina General Statutes at <https://www.ncleg.gov/Laws/GeneralStatutesTOC>
17. **PaaS:** Platform as a Service
18. **PBA:** Pharmacy Benefit Administration
19. **PDM/CVO:** Provider Data Management / Credentialing Verification Organization
20. **Provider:** A person who is trained and licensed to give health care. Also, an organization or facility that is licensed to give health care.
21. **RFI:** Request for Information
22. **RPO:** Recovery Point Objective
23. **RTO:** Recovery Time Objective
24. **SaaS:** Software as a Service

D. Core Consolidated DHB Call Center Solution Functions

The solution should have the capability to provide the following functionality:

- a. Proposed solution should be cloud based: Software as a Service (SaaS) or Platform as a Service (PaaS).
- b. Proposed solution should be scalable for the capability to add call centers to the system.
- c. Utilizes a single phone number that Medicaid Stakeholders can call to connect to the correct call center or call line.
- d. Call Center Solution utilizes an AI Enabled AVRS that triages Medicaid calls:
 - i. Caller information;
 - ii. Call reason; and
 - iii. Reference the databases to either answer the question or to transfer the caller to the appropriate call center.
- e. The AVRS follows the already documented Transfer and Referral Process (Attachment 1).

- f. Ability to transfer calls to Direct Inward Dial (DID) numbers.
- g. Ability to interact with the caller and intake voice response.
- h. Ability for caller to perform self-service tasks, such as Medicaid programs (family planning or full Medicaid), or transferring to another department.
- i. Ability to share authentication information with the receiving Call Center.
- j. Solution provides a system that is available 99.9% of the time 24 hours/day; except for expected maintenance and recover from issues within 1 hour.
- k. Describe the availability and recoverability of your solution. Provide a disaster recovery capability RTO and RPO.
- l. Ability to support English and Spanish languages and is configurable for future languages, if required, without extensive effort to allow beneficiaries the ability to use the system and be routed to the correct call center.
- m. Leverages DHHS integration, analytics, and security services.
- n. Have the capability to integrate with individual call centers: NC Fast, MIS, NCTracks, NCAalytics, and other MES Modules (PDM/CVO and PBA) to provide beneficiary and provider information.
- o. Capability to provide reporting to NC Analytics.
- p. Capability to provide analytics from the system including First Call Resolution and Quality Assurance Monitoring which verifies the accuracy of the AVRS, Post Call Surveys.

E. Standard Requirements

The proposed solution must be compliant with:

1. CMS regulations and guidelines;
<https://www.cms.gov/marketplace/resources/regulations-guidance>
2. The Department's Confidentiality, Privacy and Security policies and other applicable regulatory requirements:
 NCDHHS Privacy Manual and Security Manual, both located here:
<https://policies.ncdhhs.gov/departmental/policies-manuals/section-viii-privacy-and-security>

 NC Statewide Information Security policies, located here:
<https://it.nc.gov/resources/cybersecurity-risk-management/esrmo-initiatives/statewide-information-security-policies>

SECTION IV. REQUESTED INFORMATION FROM RESPONDENT

A. Content and Format

1. The Department requests concise, detailed responses to the inquiries in Sections IV.B. and IV.C below. The response in its entirety shall be limited to fifty (50) pages.
2. Responses should fully describe how the Respondent's services would comply with applicable state and federal laws, regulations, statutes and meet the Departments goals, functions and requirements.

B. Information about Respondent

1. The Respondent should provide an overview of their company's history, scope of products and services offered, and locations of operation.

2. The Respondent should indicate their experience in providing solutions with requirements similar to those provided in this RFI by selecting from the following experience ratings:

| Level of Experience | Description of Level of Experience |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| None | New to the solution required in this RFI or no successful implementations of a solution |
| In Progress | No implementation of a solution completed, one (1) or more implementations of a solution currently in progress |
| Limited | One (1) to four (4) successful implementations of a solution in the last two (2) years |
| Extensive | Five (5) or more successful implementations of a solution in the last two (2) years |

3. Response should provide the following:

- Description of the Respondent's primary customer base or market, including other state Medicaid programs;
- Respondent's policy or statement outlining support provided for current and previous services similar to those required in this RFI;
- Description of relevant additional services offered by Respondent;
- Description of how the Respondent's solution would comply with the requirements contained within this RFI.
- Explanation of any issues or exceptions to the Department's requirements;
- Listing of states or agencies which utilize Respondent's solution in a manner that is the same as or similar to those required by this RFI. Response should include the state/agency name, most recent implementation, contract start and end date, description of scope of work, the duration of the any contracts, and the termination dates;
- Lessons learned from working with other states or agencies to implement a solution of similar size, scope and with requirements the same or similar to those required by the Department;
- Description of the impact the implemented solution had with other states in terms of the benefits and efficiencies made to the call center solution;
- Description of familiarity with and work done to support Medicaid consolidated call centers;
- Current or previous efforts to utilize Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUB's) and/or the implementation of equity, diversity, and inclusion in hiring practices, policies, and procedures.

C. Solution Functionality and Performance

Respondents should provide detailed information regarding their Consolidated DHB Call Center Solution and associated capabilities. Include detailed descriptions of the specifications in the following areas:

- Solution Architecture
 - Describe the features and capabilities of the tools used to build, operate, and automate functions of the solution.
- Data
 - Describe how the solution supports storing and viewing both the raw and curated data.
 - Describe any import/export and/or extraction translation and load tools included in the solution and the capability for data translation along with data conversion.
- Analytics and Reporting.

- a. Describe the solution's capability to generate summarized, detail, and custom reports.
4. Operations
 - a. Describe the level of business resources the Department would need to implement, support, and maintain the solution.
 - b. Describe the level of IT resources the Department would need to implement, operate, and maintain to support the solution.
 - c. Describe the solution's capability to provide issue resolution as an escalation strategy.
 - d. Describe the solution's capability to capitalize on AVRS efficiencies.
5. Security
 - a. Describe if the solution provides a portal and, if so, how the Department would access the portal while maintaining security measures.
 - b. Describe proposed solution's authentication and authorization including proposed user roles associated with the data and the AI access each provide.
 - c. Describe your approach to conduct an annual privacy and security assessment based on the CMS published third-party privacy and security assessment framework. Include in your response if you will allow the Department or the Department authorized contractors access to your application infrastructure (network, systems, application, databased, etc.) to perform the privacy and security assessment or if you will provide a HITRUST CSF assessment certification from an independent third party.
 - d. Describe how the proposed solution's AI model ensures correctness, prevents bias, and the estimated accuracy.
 - e. Describe if the solution has protections in place to prevent the AI from disclosing information to unauthorized individuals.
 - f. Describe your approach if the AI, or any part of the automation fails, to have a level of operability as part of our continuity of operations planning and disaster recovery.
 - g. Describe if the solution will have an AI model that continues to learn to improve correctness and continue to operate without bias and in a responsible way.
 - h. Describe how your proposed solution complies with applicable security standards identified by the State.
 - NCDHHS Privacy Manual and Security Manual, both located here: <https://policies.ncdhhs.gov/departamental/policies-manuals/section-viii-privacy-and-security>
 - NC Statewide Information Security policies, located here: <https://it.nc.gov/resources/cybersecurity-risk-management/esrmo-initiatives/statewide-information-security-policies>

D. Financial / Total Cost of Ownership

1. Respondents are asked to provide information regarding estimated costs to procure and operate a Consolidated DHB Call Center Solution as described in this RFI. This information will help the Department understand acquisition and on-going costs and be used to support budget development and funding requests.
2. Respondents will not be held to pricing estimates provided in response to this RFI should the Department decide to proceed with a competitive solicitation.
3. Respondents are reminded pursuant to Section I.E of this RFI and NCGS 132-1, et seq., information or documents provided to the Department in response to this RFI are Public Record and subject to inspection, copy and release to the public unless properly marked and exempt from disclosure by statute, including, but not limited to, NCGS § 132-1.2.

4. Respondents are asked to provide cost information in a format of their choosing and, to the extent possible, include the following:
 - a. An estimated cost model or likely range of costs to purchase, implement, and operate the described solution;
 - b. If pricing information is limited or unavailable, describe Respondent's preferred pricing model or structure, including unit costs based on key variables;
 - c. Assumptions underlying pricing response (e.g., charge basis, charge variances and sensitivities, etc.) and/or similar factors to consider; and
 - d. Specify components which would need to be procured separately by the State vs. provided as a component of the Respondent's described solution and included in Respondent's cost estimate.

ATTACHMENT: 1. Transfer Referral Approach